



# Advocacy & Accountability

Representing over 3 million people in Massachusetts since 1985

Thursday May 15, 2025  
Remote Connection Via Zoom  
10:00 AM

## ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

### A. Roll call attendance

A commencing roll call was voted as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Here (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Here (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Here (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Here (remote)
Brian White	Burlington	Here (remote)
Kathy Watkins	Cambridge	Here (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Here (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Here (remote)
James Finegan	Lynnfield W.D.	Here (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Here (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Here (remote)
Timothy McGivern	Medford	Here (remote)
Elena Proakis Ellis	Melrose	Here (remote)
Mike Retzky	Needham	Here (remote)

Name	Community	Vote
Mike Retzky	Needham	Here (remote)
Tom Fitzgerald	Newton	Here (remote)
Margaret LaForest	Quincy	Here (remote)
Nicholas Rystrom	Revere	Here (remote)
Richard Raiche	Somerville	Here (remote)
Sam Stivers	Southborough	Here (remote)
John DeAmicis	Stoneham	Here (remote)
Joseph Conway	Wakefield	Here (remote)
Ian McKenzie	Walpole	Here (remote)
David Cohen	Wellesley	Here (remote)
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Here (remote)
John Westerling	Worcester	Here (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin/Ware	Here (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Here (remote)

### B. Executive Director's Report

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, provided updates on membership outreach and legislative matters.

He noted that with a fuller Advisory Board staff now in place, efforts are resuming to address long-standing vacancies. Outreach is ongoing to fill both gubernatorial appointee positions and open community seats. Mr. Romero encouraged attendees to suggest potential nominees, particularly in communities that currently lack voting representation.

On the legislative front, Mr. Romero reported that the Senate Ways and Means Committee's budget proposal does not include MWRA debt service assistance. While it appears to include the usual \$500,000 allocation for Clinton, a key section of the language is missing. Advisory Board and MWRA staff are reviewing whether this omission was an error or intentional.



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Matthew A.  
Matthew Romero



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The Advisory Board has also submitted testimony in support of the WIPPES legislation and continues to track other legislation as it progresses.

## C. **Approval of the MWRA Advisory Board's final FY26 operating budget**

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, presented the Advisory Board's proposed FY26 operating budget for final approval. He noted that the budget had been reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee in advance of this meeting.

Key changes include the return to a full staff complement of four full-time employees and the planned addition of a part-time administrative assistant. This new role will focus on core administrative functions such as payroll, accounts payable, and tracking paid time off. The position is intended to relieve the staff analyst of routine duties and allow for greater focus on analytical projects and long-term initiatives.

Mr. Romero also confirmed continued participation in Northeastern University's co-op program. The incoming co-op student, Bernadette, will begin in July following the conclusion of the current co-op's term in June.

*A motion was put forward to approve the Advisory Board FY26 Operating Budget as presented and filed with the records of the meeting. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Michael Rademacher, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.*

## D. **Presentation: Advisory Board Comments & Recommendations on MWRA's proposed FY26 CEB & CIP**

Matthew Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board, presented the Preliminary FY26 Comments & Recommendations report, which had been distributed in advance. He explained that this year's report marks the MWRA's 40th anniversary and places a strong emphasis on long-term planning, fiscal transparency, and ratepayer affordability. A central recommendation is to reconvene the Long-Term Rates Management Committee to reestablish alignment between capital spending, obligation forecasting, and rate setting—especially given the scale of upcoming investments such as the Metropolitan Tunnel Redundancy Program. Mr. Romero noted that without renewed coordination, the risk of backloading costs and burdening future ratepayers increases significantly.

He went on to summarize other key themes from the report. The Advisory Board recommends reducing MWRA's proposed FY26 rate increase from 2.98% to 2.70%, supported by approximately \$5.8 million in targeted expenditure reductions. The report also calls on MWRA to make strategic use of operating surpluses—directing savings from vacancies and other areas into pre-funding pension and OPEB liabilities or defeasing outstanding debt. Additionally, Mr. Romero highlighted concerns about persistent vacancies and recommended greater





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transparency around staffing targets and budgeting practices. He encouraged members to review the full draft and provide feedback ahead of the final vote in June, noting the importance of clearly communicating the tradeoffs between operating decisions, capital investments, and long-term financial sustainability.

*A motion was made to approve the Advisory Board's Comments & Recommendations on MWRA's Proposed FY26 CEB and CIP. It was moved by David Manugian, seconded by Maurice Handel, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.*

## E. Committee reports

### • Finance Committee

Finance Committee Chair Elena Proakis Ellis noted that there were no major updates since the last full committee meeting. However, she mentioned that Christine Bennett had continued work on updates to the online dashboard and that progress would be shared at a future meeting.

### • Operations Committee

Operations Committee Chair Michael Rademacher turned to Executive Director Matthew Romero to introduce the discussion of the Lynnfield Center Water District's application for admission to the MWRA waterworks system. Mr. Romero summarized that the application had already been reviewed and unanimously approved by both the Operations and Executive Committees. He then introduced Colleen Rizzi, Director of Environmental and Regulatory Affairs at MWRA, to provide a high-level overview of the request.

Ms. Rizzi explained that Lynnfield Center Water District is seeking admission through an interconnection with the Town of Wakefield, a current partial MWRA member. The district seeks supplemental water due to quality and quantity issues in its groundwater supply, and has completed all required environmental and regulatory steps, including NEPA and Water Resources Commission approvals. Their average daily demand is projected at 0.28 MGD, with a max day of 0.36 MGD.

The last remaining step is the passage of legislation—House Bill 972—required to amend the MWRA Enabling Act and formally admit the district. She clarified that the Advisory Board is being asked to recommend approval contingent upon the bill's passage, so that once enacted, MWRA staff can bring it directly to the Board of Directors for a final vote. Questions from members, including Mr. Pavlik, clarified the timing, legal structure, and emergency provisions.

*A motion was put forward to recommend that the Advisory Board approve LCWD's admission to the MWRA waterworks system to MWRA Board of Directors pursuant to MWRA's Policy #OP.10 and contingent on the passage of H.972 as presented with the meeting materials and final MWRA Board of Directors approval. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by*



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*Michael Rademacher, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.*

- **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee report followed, with Chair Richard Raiche explaining that the Board lacked a quorum of member communities required to act on the one item scheduled for action: the nomination of Joe Foti to a position on the Executive Committee. Mr. Raiche stated that while the Executive Committee had met and unanimously supported Mr. Foti's nomination—he being the only individual to submit a formal application—procedurally, the Advisory Board still allows for nominations from the floor. Without a quorum, however, the nomination could not proceed and would be tabled until the next meeting. Mr. Raiche added that while Mr. Foti had made a strong impression during the Executive Committee's deliberations, it would not be appropriate for him to address the full Board until a vote could formally take place.

- F. **MWRA Executive Director Update**

In staffing news, Mr. Laskey acknowledged the planned retirements of several long-serving employees, including Chief Operating Officer Dave Coppes, Teddy Regan, and Susan Carter. He recognized the potential concern these departures may raise but affirmed MWRA's efforts to maintain strong institutional continuity. He emphasized that MWRA has invested in building a deep internal bench and is actively recruiting for key positions. Mr. Laskey also credited the Human Resources team with expanding recruitment partnerships with local colleges and deploying new outreach strategies to strengthen the hiring pipeline.

- G. **Approval of Advisory Board meeting minutes from April 18, 2025**

Minutes will be put on the June Advisory Board meeting agenda as they have not been reviewed yet.

- H. **New business**

None.

- I. **Adjournment**

*A motion to adjourn was put forward. It was moved by Maurice Handel, seconded by David Manugian, and added to the omnibus roll call vote at the end of the meeting.*

- J. **Omnibus Roll Call Vote**

*A motion to approve the omnibus vote was put forward. It was moved by Maurice Handel and seconded by David Manugian.*

An omnibus vote on the following items took place:

- Approval of the Advisory Board FY26 Operating Budget as presented and filed with the records of the meeting.





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- Approval of the Advisory Board's Comments & Recommendations on MWRA's Proposed FY26 CEB and CIP.
- To recommend that the MWRA Board of Directors approve LCWD's admission to the MWRA waterworks system to the Executive Committee pursuant to MWRA's Policy #OP.10 and contingent on the passage of H.972 as presented with the meeting materials and final MWRA Board of Directors approval
- Adjournment of the meeting.

The omnibus vote was as follows:

Name	Community	Vote
Michael Rademacher	Arlington	Yes (remote)
David Manugian	Bedford	Yes (remote)
John Sullivan	Boston (BWSC)	Yes (remote)
Jay Hersey	Brookline	Yes (remote)
Brian White	Burlington	Yes (remote)
Kathy Watkins	Cambridge	Yes (remote)
Stephen Leone	Framingham	Yes (remote)
David Pavlik	Lexington	Yes (remote)
James Finegan	Lynnfield W.D.	Yes (remote)
Yem Lip	Malden	Yes (remote)
Amy McHugh	Marblehead	Yes (remote)
Timothy McGivern	Medford	Yes (remote)
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David Cohen	Wellesley	Yes (remote)
Joseph Lobao	Wilmington	Yes (remote)
John Westerling	Worcester	Yes (remote)
J.R. Greene	Quabbin/Ware	Yes (remote)
Maurice Handel	MAPC	Yes (remote)

Respectfully submitted,

David Manugian, Secretary

These minutes reflect the discussion of the meeting. The Advisory Board maintains audio recordings of Advisory Board meetings that are available upon request.



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